

Hobbies

Use of coinage just isn't in the cards

By Roger Boye

U.S. coinage production continued to drop during 1992 as a slow economy and the increasing use of credit cards apparently tempered demand for hard money.

Last year's total of 12 billion pieces—the lowest in several years—has a face value of \$465 million, or about \$1.85 worth of new money for each U.S. citizen. Lincoln pennies again accounted for three of every four pieces made at the federal mints.

Coinage demand is affected by population levels, economic activity, inflation and the use of "money cards."

In a report issued last year, the U.S. Mint said it spent about 92 cents to produce each dollar's

worth of Lincolns, the most expensive coin on the basis of cost to face value. By comparison, four quarters cost about 17 cents to make. In 1989, the government minted nearly 18 billion coins.

Again this year, the American Numismatic Association will award scholarships to at least a dozen teenagers to attend its one-week summer conference in Colorado Springs.

Applicants must be between ages 13 and 17 as of Jan. 1, with judging to be based on numismatic and extracurricular activities, among other things. For more information, write to the ANA Educational Services Department, 818 N. Cascade Ave., Colorado Springs, Colo. 80903. Deadline

for completed applications is April 15.

Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf, commander of U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf War, and Gen. Colin L. Powell, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, are depicted on two new government medals being sold to collectors.

A three-inch bronze medal of either type costs \$21 and a 1½-inch specimen—which has a much smaller surface area—\$2.25. The items duplicate Congressional Gold Medals that each man received in December.

To order either medal, send a check made payable to the United States Mint to the mint's Order Processing Branch, 10001 Aerospace Drive, Lanham, Md. 20706.